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Arthur L. Phelps

What still peace is. I need the voice of the sedges
That knows not any of the old earth yearning
And its cry, but is quiet,
Like the air and the water.

Arthur L. Phelps

THE SCREECH OWL

He sits all day in a cemetery tree,
The damp of sinking graves upon his breath;
Brooding the little ways of life and death,
Chuckling at thought of immortality.
Long rows of tombstones make his library,
Rare tomes of wit—"dry wit," he seems to say.
He cons them till night comes, then flies away
Into the dark, to call for you or me.
Or so, when as a boy I heard his cry
Grate the harp-strings of night, I thought it was;
A man, I cross myself, a boy still—half:
As on that night I saw a dear friend die,
And long sat brooding on the patient stars,
And seemed to hear, far off, his mocking laugh!

J. E. Scruggs